

Navigating Dietary Requirements



HARRISON'S
Wine Grill & Catering

At Harrison's, we do a lot of wedding catering. Every wedding reception is unique and we work closely with couples and their families to create a memorable event that meets their goals and their budgets. For most people, planning their wedding it is the first time they have worked with a caterer on a big event. So, understandably, they have a lot to learn... a lot of decisions to make, a lot of unanswered questions. It is important to remember is that you are also hosts, so you want to provide food that your guests like and that make them feel cared for. Specific dietary requirements can no longer be avoided with more and more people identifying with dietary restrictive lifestyles. Dietary requirements can be of a medical, religious or lifestyle nature, so it is important to display openness and creativity to meet those needs.

Here we outline things to keep in mind when navigating the dietary requirements of your guests.

Vegetarian

Most people can identify with the restrictions of a vegetarian diet: no meat, poultry or fish. Non-meat diets are increasingly more common, which arrives concurrently with a plethora of options to provide your attendees with.

Recommendation: Provide a non-meat, *protein* alternative so your vegetarian attendees do not go hungry. They will appreciate being served more than just salad.

Pescetarian

Most simply put, a pescetarian diet is the same as a Vegetarian diet, however sea-food is consumed. In other words, no meat or poultry is the only restriction. Dairy & egg products are ok, but meat stocks are not.

Recommendation: As well as a vegetarian option, be sure to include a fish option in your menu that does not use any kind of meat stock. If it does include a sprinkling of a meat product, make sure there is an option to have it without.

Gluten-Free / Celiac

People suffering celiac disease cannot eat anything containing gluten, which is a protein most often found in wheat, rye, barley and oats products. Meat, poultry, sea-food, dairy, rice, quinoa, beans, legumes and nuts are all ok.

Recommendation: If you're providing something traditionally heavy in gluten like pizza, ensure a gluten-free option is available. Gluten-free options are becoming increasingly readily available.

Lactose Intolerant

Lactose is a sugar found in milk and to a lesser extent, dairy products. Consuming lactose for people with this intolerance can cause very uncomfortable symptoms such as flatulence & bloating amongst others.

Recommendation: We recommend offering a range of milks at your coffee bar, in-

cluding Soy & Nut Milks to cater for milk preferences, and offering dairy-free desert options. Many people who are lactose intolerant can tolerate products of goats & sheep, so consider a dairy-free cheese option too.

Nut Allergies

Nut allergies, and specifically peanut allergies, are one of the most dangerous allergies, because even the smallest trace of a particular nut can cause an extremely harmful allergic reaction.

Recommendation: To ensure guests can have a truly comfortable experience, it is best to identify which menu or snack items have been prepared in the presence of nuts or nut oils by labeling this with a card next to the food, or on the menu.

Shellfish Allergies

Certain religions forbid consuming shellfish, but shellfish allergies are also common. Shellfish includes Lobster, Shrimp, Clams, Mussels, Shellfish Roe, Squid, Octopus, Cuttlefish, Crayfish, Crabs and more.

Recommendation: It is best to identify when shellfish is an ingredient (especially if it not immediately obvious), and when other food has been prepared in the presence of shellfish.

Kosher

Guests following a kosher diet will not eat pork or shellfish, but will eat meat & poultry if it is butchered in a kosher fashion. Kosher guests will also avoid eating dairy & meat at the same meal.

Recommendation: Ensure portion sizes of your meals are large enough if dairy or meat is not consumed, and ensure your vendors have a Kosher butchering option available before you proceed with them.

Halal

Observant Muslims will abstain from eating any pork or any meat if it has not been blessed in a way that follows the Muslim tradition. Alcohol will also be avoided.

Recommendation: Again, ensure your vendors have a Halal option available.